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The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America

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Book Reviews and Notices

The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America, by Stephen Warren. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xii, 308 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Jacob F. Lee is a postdoctoral fellow and visiting assistant professor of history at Indiana University, Bloomington. His current book project is *Rivers of Power: Indians and Colonists in the North American Midcontinent*.

In *The Worlds the Shawnees Made*, Stephen Warren reorients the history of the Shawnee Indians and the Midwest, both temporally and spatially. Most studies of the Shawnees and colonialism in the Ohio River valley center on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and famous Shawnee leaders like Blue Jacket and Tecumseh. Warren, however, emphasizes the long history of the region and its peoples, beginning with the Fort Ancient ancestors of the Shawnees. He also demonstrates that the history of the Midwest cannot be told in isolation. Through the Shawnees, he links the Midwest to the South and Mid-Atlantic. As disease and warfare pushed the Shawnees out of the Ohio valley during the mid-1600s, trade and other opportunities lured them to borderland regions—the Illinois Country, British Carolina, and the Susquehanna River valley—where the Shawnees became slave traders and military allies to Europeans and Indians alike. As the borderland communities collapsed in the late seventeenth century, Shawnees reunited in William Penn’s “peaceable kingdom,” which crumbled when British colonists decided that land was the Shawnees’ most valuable resource. From the 1720s to 1754, under pressure from Pennsylvania, the Shawnees returned to the Ohio valley, where they used their knowledge of North America and their many connections to build powerful alliances that linked the Midwest and the South.

Warren makes several important interventions in Native, midwestern, and early American history. First, in contrast to scholars who have established the power of place in shaping Native identity and spirituality, Warren finds Shawnee identity rooted in ceremonies that survived centuries of migration and upheaval. Using sources ranging from origin stories to contemporary rituals, Warren shows the importance of migration and reinvention to Shawnee identity. Because the frequency and breadth of their relocations make the Shawnees unusual in early

America, Warren's work does not overturn those studies that emphasize place, but he demonstrates that Native peoples construct identities in many ways. Second, although he perhaps understates the vulnerability of migrants (see, for example, the fate of the Westos), Warren reveals that movement was a source of power, as the Shawnees used connections made in their travels as weapons in the fight against colonialism. Only through their alliances with other Indian nations could the Shawnees reject both France and Britain. Finally, Warren begins the history of Indian removal in the early 1700s, when Pennsylvanians swindled territory from neighboring Indian nations. He rightly argues that Indian removal was not a single event but a centuries-long process of dispossession of Native peoples by colonists.

The Worlds the Shawnees Made is a valuable history of the Shawnees from the pre-colonial era to the Seven Years' War, but Warren assumes that his readers will have substantial knowledge about the Shawnees' experiences in the 60 years that followed. Two of his arguments depend on that knowledge. First, he alludes to the diplomatic work of Blue Jacket and Tecumseh as the culmination of the coalitions Shawnees forged during the mid-1700s. Some discussion of those alliances would buttress Warren's argument that the Shawnees gained power from their trans-regional movements. Second, and more significantly, Warren proposes a "long history of removal," of which the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was only part, but in 1754, the Shawnees remained on the Ohio valley homelands of their ancestors (155). A century of further removals lay ahead of them. Those interested in the conclusion of that story will have to look elsewhere. Minor qualms aside, Warren offers a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Native peoples of the Midwest and their adaptations in the face of colonialism.

Warrior Nations: The United States and Indian Peoples, by Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. xiii, 237 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Robert Wooster is Regents Professor of History at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. His books include *The American Military Frontiers: The United States Army in the West, 1783-1900* (2009).

Were the conflicts between Indians and the United States of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inevitable? In *Warrior Nations*, featuring case studies that examine the causes of warfare between the United States and the Indians of the Ohio Valley (1786-1795), the Red Stick War (1813-1814), the Arikara War (1823), the Black Hawk War (1832), the Minnesota Sioux War (1862), the wars on the Southern Plains